



FINAL CHAPTER: WHERE THE CORE SWELLS





NO, PROBABLY NOT...

IF A BALL HAD BEEN FOUND NEXT TO THE BOY, WOULD THE POLICE HAVE ASSURED IT WAS THE WEAPON?

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER THAT FITS.

YES!

YOU MEAN #1!



I BET THEY DID KEEP ON PLAYING...

...BUT BOYHOOD PASSION FOR BASEBALL HURT SO EASILY QUENCHED.

...THEY STOPPED PLAYING BALL AT THE PARK...

THAT'S RIGHT, EVER SINCE UOJIMA'S BUNCH BROKE SOMEONE'S WINDOW...



...ON THE ROOFTOP EARLY IN THE MORNING BEFORE TEACHERS ARRIVED.



IT'S SLOPPY PLACEMENT ALSO MAKES SENSE IF IT WAS DONE AS A TRAP RATHER THAN A WEAPON.

THAT'S TRUE, BUT STILL...

NOT MUCH WORDS OR EVIDENCE WOULD BE LEFT.

THERE'S A FORMER FENCE AND PLOTS OF GRASS.

BASEBALL ON THE ROOF OF THE SCHOOL?

HOW BOLD!





YOU
HAVE ANY
PROOF?

...IN
THAT SPOT,
EVERY
MORNING?

SUCH
AS YOU, ARIN,
WHO SUPPOSEDLY
HAD BEEN
PRACTICING YOUR
CHOREOGRAPHY
THERE...

NO,
BUT I GUESS
THAT WAS THE
NOISE TENTO
HEARD THAT
MORNING.



PLUS,
CONSIDERING
THE INCIDENT
THAT CAME TO
LIGHT RIGHT
AFTERWARDS...

...BUT ARIN
IS AN ANGELIC
STUDENT WHO'S
NEVER BEEN
REPRIMANDED
BY A TEACHER.
IT'S NATURAL
FOR HER
TO CRY.

PERSONALLY
I WOULD'VE
JUST
CONFERRED
TO BREAKING
THE THREE...

YOU
MIGHT'VE
BEEN
SCARED.



BUT
THERE WAS
A CERTAIN
CIRCUM-
STANCE THAT
PREVENTED
ARIN FROM
FEELING AT
EASE.

YES... IF IT
WASN'T BEEN
RELATED,
THERE
WOULD'VE
BEEN DIRT
ON
SHIRATORI'S
CLOTHES.

SO
WAS THE
FLOWERSHOT
UNRELATED
TO WHAT
HAPPENED
TO MISS
SHIRATORI?

...THE
VICTIM
WAS
FOUND LYING
WHERE
THE
ANNUAL
SHED...

HMM BUT,
ATTORNEY...



YOUR
EXPRESSION
SAID I'M
RIGHT.



...HAD
COMPLETELY
DISAPPEARED,
HADN'T IT?



THE
FLOWER-
POT THAT
YOU
THOUGHT
HAD
FALLEN...



YOU
KIDDED
SOMEONE
RIGHT HAVE
POUND
OUT...

I HEAR
IT'S JUST
A JOKE-
PICKER-
UP T IT?

WITHOUT
ANY
EXPLANA-
TION, YOU
MUST'VE
BEEN
CONFUSED.



HAVE
IT'S PROBABLY
MUCH THE ONLY
JUSTIFICATION
FOR HER
STRANDED
TESTIMONY.



HOW
DO YOU
KNOW
THAT?



O-OUT,
THUSAM...



NO,
ZALUSAM.

EXACTLY
AND IT' ALSO
SEEN USUALLY
WITH A BROOM
THAT MORNING.



HAVE WILL,
THESE'D
BE SPILLED
DIRT TOO,
SO MAYBE
WITH A
BROOM?

BY THE WAY
TENTO, IF HAD
WANTED TO
CLEAN AWAY
A BROKEN
FLOWERPOT,
HOW WOULD
YOU DO IT?



NOT
SURE...

ON OUR
WAY TO THE
COURTYARD,
WE FOUND HIM
CARRYING A
BROOM...

I BELIEVE
USUALLY HAD
GOTTEN RID
OF THE
BROKEN
FLOWERPOT.

HE'S NOT
A STAR
STUDENT
WHO'D BE
SWEEPING
OUT OF THE
GOODNESS
OF HIS
HEART.





TENTO AT 7:40,
SO THEY JUST
REASSED EACH
OTHER.

SHIBATORO
WAS OBSERVED
ARRIVING AT
SCHOOL AT
7:45 A.M. THAT
MORNING.

IT
HAPPENED
OUTSIDE.

*Shibatoro had Creative Keeper duties
at school 7:45. Re: shibatoro*

HUNT

H-NO,
I'D ONLY
SHUT IT...

I WAS IN
A HURRY...

I BET
SHIBATORO
SAW THAT
AND
THOUGHT TO HER-
SELF...

TENTO,
YOU
MIGHT
LOOKED
THE DOOR
AFTER
YOU,
RIGHT?

SHIBATORO
LIKELY
WITNESSED
TENTO CHASE
AFTER THE
ESCAPED
RABBIT.

"MORE
RABBITS ARE
GOING TO
GET OUT!"

HUNT
OUT
T

GEEZ,
NANASHOHO,
FOR
REAL?!

"IF THAT
DOOR'S
NOT
LOOKED
QUICKLY..."

AS HER MIND
CLOUDED
OVER, BEING
THE SUPER
RESPONSIBLE
PERSON
SHE IS...

...I'M
SURE
SHIBATORO
HAD JUST
ONE
BURNING
THOUGHT

THINK

...AS LL
LUCK
WOULD
HAVE IT...

AND
IN THAT
INSTANT
...



... SHEATORE
USED
THE LAST
OF HER
STRENGTH
TO ENTER
IT..

...
AND LOCK
THE
DOOR
HER-
SELF.

SINCE THE
ANIMAL
SHED CAN
ONLY BE
MANUALLY
LOCKED
FROM THE
INSIDE...



... SHE
HAD
TO
LOCK
THE
DOOR!



WE
SHOULD'VE
JUST
TAKEN
THAT AT
FACE
VALUE.

YOU KNOW
THE ONLY
FINGERPRINTS
FOUND ON
THE HANDLE
AND LATCH
WERE THOSE
OF CREATURE
MEMBERS
TENTO AND
SHEATORE.



THE PERSON
WHO CREATED
THE LOCKED
ROOM STATE
WAS THE
VICTIM
HERSELF.

AT
WHICH
POINT,
SHE
PASSED
OUT.



... WAS
HAPPY!

... THE PERP
WHO HAD THE
BALL...



YES, THE
ANSWER
REVEALED
FURTHER
COMPOUNDED
THE SOLVING
OF THIS
CASE, BUT...

IF THAT'S
THE CASE,
THEN THE BALL
SHOULD'VE
BEEN ROLLING
AROUND THE
COURTYARD,
YET NO ONE
FOUND...

B-BUT
WAIT!

I SUSPECT THE BALL ROLLED INTO HAPPY'S KASEE AFTER CONNECTING WITH SHIBATORI, AND HE CARRIED IT OFF.



THE ANIMAL SHED AND HAPPY'S DOGHOUSE ARE NEAR EACH OTHER.



SO I HAD SHIBATORI RETRIEVE IT FOR ME JUST NOW.

SINCE HE APPARENTLY ENJOYS PLAYING WITH BALLS.

That's it! He always does that with balls!

WHICH IS ALSO LIKELY WHY HE WAS SHAKING-- HE WAS HAPPY A BALL HAD COME HIS WAY.



...WAS INSIDE HAPPY'S DOGHOUSE!

THE ~~HUSKING~~ WEAPON, THE BALL

IF MY THEORY'S RIGHT...

...IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE DOGHOUSE, YOU'LL FIND THE BALL!



WHAT
TANGLED
THINGS
UP...
...WAS
NOTHING
MORE
THAN OUR
OWN
HEARTS.

...OR ANY
OTHER
PERP,
NEVER
EXISTED.



RED
OSRE

BUT...

...HOW
COULD
THIS BE
THE
TRUTH!



FOR SURE, THE REASON
WHY HE SAW THE BAT AS A
READY WEAPON INSTEAD
OF SPORTS EQUIPMENT
WASN'T JUST BECAUSE
THERE WAS NO BALL.



...GRUPPES

...HATED?

...
PROTECTING
ONCESELF
WITH LIES...

...DURING
SOMEONE...

...THAT MY
BAT HAD
BEEN USED
BY SOMEBODY
TO HURT
SOMEONE.



THE
TRUE
OSRE
DWELLS
WITHIN
OUR OWN
HEARTS!

SUCH
WARPED
MINDS CAN
AT TIMES
PRODUCE
A MORE
FEARSOME
AND SAD
INCIDENT
THAN ANY
PSYCHO
KILLER.

OSRES DWELL INSIDE OUR OWN HEARTS.

UDZUHI
...!

N-NO!
ALL OF
US ARE...

SHIRATORI'S
INJURY WAS
DUE TO THE
BALL I HIT,
RIGHT?!

I'VE DONE
SOMETHING
THAT CAN'T
BE TAKEN
BACK







ANY NUMBER OF PENALTIES
COULD HAVE BEEN LEVIED
AGAINST
LOLLY AND
THE OTHER
BOYS FOR
PLAYING
BALL ON
SCHOOL
GROUNDS,
OR AGAINST
AIDAN FOR
BREAKING
THE
FLOWERPOT,
BUT...

...AS AN
EARLY
CELEBRA-
TION OF
CHILDREN'S
RECOVERY
THE JUDGE
DECLARED
ALL PARTIES
NOT GUILTY

...HAVING
ALL RUN
OUT OF
THERE,
HARD ON
LOLLY'S
HEELS...

...
EXCEPT
FOR A
FEW...

THOUGH
THIS IS
SOMETHING
WE FOUND
OUT LATER...







***YOU'RE
RED OGRE,
AREN'T YOU?***

THE NEXT
CHAPTER
GOES INTO
THE FINAL
ARC OF THE
SERIES
AND THE
END
OF THE
MANGA
IS
HERE!!